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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: Cross-Strait Relations

SUMMARY:

1. Taiwan dailies June 4-6 carried reports on two topics in particular: U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's criticism of China's military expansion and President Chen Shui-bian's willingness to meet with China's President Hu Jintao in the United States. With regard to the first topic, both the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's largest daily, and "Taiwan Daily" carried on their front pages June 5 articles on Rumsfeld's criticism of China. As to the second topic, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," "Taiwan Daily," and the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" carried on their front pages June 4 President Chen's suggestion that he meet with Hu in the United States.

2. Roughly half of the editorials in the local newspapers published between June 4 -6 focused on domestic politics: e.g. local tax reform, press freedom, the minor reshuffle of the Cabinet, etc. The other half focused on U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's criticism toward China, and cross-Strait relations. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" editorialized that even the United States worries about China's military buildup -- there is no way for Taiwan to talk peace to China. The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" said in its editorial that Taiwan should monitor closely whether there is a U.S. policy shift toward China. The editorial of the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" urged Taiwan's Pan-Blue alliance to abandon its dream of accepting the "One China" principle in exchange for peace across the Strait.

3. In terms of cross-Strait relations, a pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" editorial suggested U.S. President George W. Bush invite President Chen Shui-bian and China's President Hu Jintao to meet in the United States. However, another "Taiwan Daily" editorial said the timing for such a meeting is inappropriate for Taiwan. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" editorialized that Taiwan should not allow Chinese tourists to visit Taiwan. Finally, an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification English-language "China Post" said the Taiwan government still has great hope in the Straits Exchange Foundation since the government has appointed a political heavyweight, DPP Legislator Chang Chun-hsiung, to become the foundation's new chairman. End summary.

1. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's statement

A) "How Can A Sheep Talk Peace to a Tiger?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (6/6):

". Even the United States, located in the eastern part of the Pacific Ocean, feels the Chinese threat -- how can Taiwan, located in the western part of the Pacific Ocean and close to China, continue to be numb [in the face of this threat]? . China has chosen Taiwan as a target for a breakthrough [of its containment,] and China also has planned to absorb Taiwan as a step to entering the Pacific Ocean. Taiwan's political parties, however, still have the fantasy that China would bestow peace [to Taiwan], and they hope China would proactively withdraw and destroy its missiles [aimed at Taiwan]. As a consequence, the U.S. arms procurements bill still runs aground in the Legislative Yuan. Nowadays, some political figures even consider that Taiwan should not care about its national security. Either China would show goodwill to Taiwan, or the United States would come to Taiwan's aid. A country [i.e. Taiwan], under the gigantic military threat from another country, that does not talk about defense capabilities but peace is the same as a sheep that tries to talk peace to a tiger. The miserable consequence [of such actions] is self-evident."

B) "The Smell of Gunpowder In the Shangri-La Dialogue"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (6/6):

". With regard to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's statement, Taiwan would be the most concerned

whether the United States would shift its policy again: if the focus of the United States shifts from the Middle East to Asia Pacific, will the hawkish views, [like those which] Rumsfeld holds, return again? Should Taiwan revise its current attitude of reconciliation with Beijing to act in accordance with the Bush administration's policy shift?

". One thing is for sure, however, [and that is] that the Taiwan issue is definitely a part of the triangular interactions between the United States, Japan, and China. It is not very clear how the consequent situation might evolve, and time is needed to conduct analysis."

C) "Rumsfeld's Talk Shows that the United States Has Worried That China's Military Buildup Would Cause an Imbalance of Military Strength in Asia, and Taiwan's Political Parties Should be Vigilant"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] editorialized (6/6):

"As to Taiwan, especially the Pan-Blue alliance, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's warning should wake

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[them] up [from believing] the myth that as long as Taiwan accepts the 'One China' [principle], cross-Straits peace can be maintained. The Pan-Blue parties and supporters have always considered that as long as Taiwan accepts China's preconditions, Taiwan's stability could be maintained. In fact, cross-Straits relations are not merely the relationship between China and Taiwan. China not only threatens Taiwan's security, but world peace as well; cross-Straits issues [are not composed of] Taiwan being provocative toward China, but definitely that China threatens Taiwan and the world. As long as one understands this critical point, insists on Taiwan's peace plan, and keeps Taiwan's national personality can Taiwan obtain stability and peace under [Taiwan's] global strategic plan. ."

12. Cross-Straits Relations

A) "Objective Conditions Have Not Matured Yet, Now Is Not the Good Time for a Meeting or Dialogue Between Cross-Straits Leaders"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] editorialized (6/6):

". Just as U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has openly questioned the evil intention of China's fast expansion of military forces, we believe that the [Taiwan] ruling authority, when prioritizing issues related to cross-Straits relations, should seek alliance with world democratic nations to urge China to remove its missiles deployed against Taiwan, build a cross-Straits military confidence mechanism, and go on to sign a nonaggression agreement rather than look forward with goodwill to a 'Bian-Hu meeting.' Only after all these objective conditions mature and form the bases can a 'Bian-Hu meeting' or other future meetings between cross-Straits leaders make any progress that is helpful for the people on both sides across the Strait."

B) "We Suggest That U.S. President Bush Invite Cross-Straits Leaders Chen Shui-bian and Hu Jintao to Formally Meet in Washington"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] suggested in an editorial (6/4):

". In addition, concluding from the current cross-Straits atmosphere, there is indeed the necessity for leaders of the two sides to hold formal meetings in order to resolve cross-Straits disputes and ease the cross-Straits situation. However, under the circumstances that Chen Shui-bian does not want to go to China and Hu Jintao is unlikely to visit Taiwan for a 'Bian-Hu meeting,' the best alternative is to follow the formula set in the late 1970s. Through the mediation of Jimmy Carter, the incumbent U.S. President at the time, Israel and the PLO signed a 'peace treaty' at Camp David. [Following this,] President George W. Bush can invite leaders across the Strait to start the historical 'Bian-Hu meeting' in Washington. We believe that this is the meeting place where both governments can accept. After all, any meetings on and resolutions to cross-Straits issues cannot rule out the witnessing and blessing by the international community.

"Furthermore, since the United States is so eager and hopeful to see obstacles against the talks be eliminated . to pave the way for the next-step meetings, probably the Bush administration can ask the Beijing authorities not to boycott President Chen's participation in person at the informal APEC Leaders Meeting. ."

C) "[We Should] Never Open Up for Chinese Tourists to Come

to Taiwan: Securing European, American and Japanese High-Spending Tourist Is the Best Approach"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (6/3):

" . China, via policy statements and actions several times, has made clear its obvious intention to devour Taiwan with thousands of schemes; the legal war highlighted by anti-secession law, plus public opinions war, propaganda war, and frequently-waged reunification war are all China's means to grab Taiwan and force Taiwan to undergo the communists' regime. Since China's foremost intention toward Taiwan is thus, when we evaluate [the issue of] Chinese people coming to Taiwan for sightseeing, we cannot do without consideration for the enemy's situation and security concerns and we cannot only consider the probable bright side for short-term business opportunities or economic benefits and ignore the accompanying external cost or comprehensive negative effects, or even further turn a blind eye to the Beijing government's penetration and espionage actions, which certainly will happen, through [Chinese] tourists coming to Taiwan.

" .It is true that because of a huge population and prosperous economic development in recent years, the number of Chinese tourists going abroad has exceeded that of Japanese tourists two years ago and reached over 16 million person-time. Although Chinese tourists have brought commercial benefits to other countries via tourism and shopping, and especially helped revitalized HKSAR's economy, they have also generated many negative effects. Things such as fundamental economic principles have told the public, there is no free lunch in this world."

D) "Chang Brings Heft to SEF"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (6/5):

". The appointment of Chang to head the SEF suggests that the Taiwan government still envisions that the SEF will remain a conduit for cross-Strait negotiations. Otherwise there would be no need to appoint a political heavyweight such as Chang for the role.

"Chang's record speaks for itself in terms of the weight he carries within the DPP. He has served as premier, as DPP chairman and as a senior lawmaker. He has also had a close relationship with President Chen Shui-bian since the time when the two were defense attorneys at the trial following the Kaohsiung incident. ."

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